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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the reluctance of Israeli inservice teachers to assume the role of mentor to student teachers in their classrooms, proposing an alternative Professional Development School (PDS) model as a starting point for rethinking ways to recruit teachers into this role. In this model, two student teachers assume full responsibility for 1 hour per week of English instruction in each class of a given grade level. The hour of instruction is built into the regular school schedule and becomes an integral part of it. The content of instruction is jointly negotiated with the English language teaching staff headed by the department coordinator and other interested key personnel in the school system. Student teachers are also required to observe English language teachers and other teachers on a regular basis and actively participate in classroom activities. Advantages of this model include: added teaching hours for participating schools; assistance by student teachers in tutoring classroom students, grading papers, and working with individuals; student teacher autonomy in their classrooms without fear of evaluation by school personnel; and alternative teacher figures for classroom students. (SM)

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PROPOSAL FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOLS

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Proposal for Professional Development Schools

In Israel, as reflected in the literature on teacher training from other parts of the world, internship in the school system serves as the most significant experience in the training of student-teachers. The traditional model of pairing a student-teacher with a mentoring in-service teacher has resulted in both advantages and disadvantages. The main disadvantage of the traditional model in Israel has come to be recognized as the shortage of successful, experienced teachers who are willing to give of their time and expertise to student-teachers. In an effort to improve upon this model, one form of the Professional Development School model is proposed here as a starting point for the rethinking of ways to recruit teachers into this all-important role for teacher-training.

John Dewey thought of teachers as students of learning who could and should reflect on their own practice and learn from one another. Dewey placed enormous importance on the role of knowledge, experience, and practice in the development of the thinking individual (Dewey in Archambault, 1964). Today, we cannot imagine granting certification as a teacher without the successful completion of a practical internship period in the school system. Both teacher educators and student-teachers themselves see this experience as the most influential one in the course of training (Levine, 1998).

The recruitment of successful, experienced teachers, however, is becoming an increasingly acute problem as enrollment of students rises and the need for new teachers manifests itself. The reluctance, and outright objection, of many teachers to fulfill this important role in the formation of student-teachers' development is related to factors I have come to recognize in my position of seeking out new supervising teachers. Overwork, lack of compensation/recognition and insecurity appear to be among the most prevalent reasons voiced by experienced teachers for their refusal to take an active part in the training of student-teachers.

Workload

Class sizes (in many cases, close to 40 pupils in a classroom), heterogeneous pupil populations (including children of new immigrants), ever-increasing demands to update

and change teaching styles in order to keep astride of new developments in curriculum and technology and administrative and assessment responsibilities have combined to over-burden the workload of most teachers in the school system. Not only is there no time left over for the additional task of mentoring student teachers, but personal professional development of the teachers themselves has become an area relegated to the sabbatical year or given up entirely.

Michele, an excellent English teacher and department coordinator in the junior high, apologizes for her lack of ability, in her words, to serve the role as supervising teacher: *"I am terribly sorry. I agreed to be a supervising teacher this year before I realized how many hours I would be teaching and the changed circumstances of the English Department at our school. A teacher took ill suddenly at the beginning of the school year and all the teachers in the department have been required to add hours to their original work schedules in order to cover her classes. We don't know how long this situation will last. I have such a hard time managing to meet with pupils and teachers who have problems during the short breaks at school that I come home totally exhausted and barely find time to prepare the next days' lessons. Although the shortage of English teachers has contributed to this situation, I can't see myself, at this time, giving the needed attention that a student-teacher deserves."*

Lack of compensation/recognition

The current conception of the internship program in Israel views the supervising teacher as a volunteer who is internally motivated to mentor the younger generation of future teachers. Not only is this psychologically defective, but it is an idealistic conception not warranted by the reality of the school system.

Recent psychological theories of adult development have not only emphasized the fluctuating stages and needs of the adult individual (Neugarten, 1979), but have placed

the stage of mentoring the younger generation, the period of generativity (Erikson, 1950), towards the end of the adult work life. The assumption that experienced teachers will "naturally" feel the need to mentor others has not been supported by lifespan studies of adult development (Levinson, 1980; Lieblich, 1986).

Even for those individual teachers who do feel the need to mentor the younger generation, the voice of the teacher quoted above is a constant reminder that this ideal conception of supervision is out of sync with the daily reality of the school system.

Many young, motivated teachers are developmentally at the stage of young adulthood whose major tasks are the formation of a stable family and career structure (Courtenay, 1994). Both financial worries and professional identities are major concerns of this period. To meet the needs of the young, experienced teacher, monetary compensation and/or professional recognition must be awarded to those who agree to undertake the important job of supervising student-teachers.

Insecurity

One of the advantages of teaching is the autonomy a teacher is given in the classroom. What goes on between teacher and pupils behind closed doors has become part of the school culture (Abdal-Haqq, 1992). This atmosphere often serves to foster close teacher-pupil relationships. In addition, teachers can learn from their mistakes and improve their practice on a daily basis without having to account to others for their behavior or attempts at changing it. Even the best of teachers deal with problems in the classroom as an ongoing challenge. Model lessons for principals or supervisors are an ordeal to be endured on specified occasions. Opening up their classrooms on a daily basis is a threatening proposition to most teachers. Their everyday practice does not measure up to their own ideal standards.

Dafne, an older teacher who has gained a reputation of excellence, says, *"You know it's never the same when someone's watching. Even the students don't act naturally. I just wouldn't be my everyday self. I feel I have to put on a show when I have visitors in my classroom. It's difficult enough trying to do your best for your students without having to worry about what others think."*

Problems of traditional model of supervision:

Following is a list of causes for the reluctance of in-service teachers to assume the role of mentor to student-teachers in their classrooms:

1. Lack of time to meet with student-teachers to explain lessons observed.
2. Lack of time to meet with student-teachers to plan student-teaching lessons.
3. Reluctance to relegate teaching hours to students due to school demands on teachers to meet curriculum requirements and prepare pupils for scheduled exams.
4. Reluctance to relegate teaching hours to students due to fear of interference in classroom rules, norms and atmosphere.
5. Reluctance to allow students to experiment with innovative teaching methods due to fear of failure.
6. Reluctance to being observed due to insecurity and fear of negative evaluation.
7. Lack of real monetary or professional incentive to overcome any or all of the above.

Professional Development School Model

Various forms of The Professional Development School model is increasingly being adopted by teacher-training programs in Israel in an attempt to overcome some of the problems inherent in the traditional model. Necessity has been the mother of

invention. The lack of in-service teachers as role models for students has led to the attempt to do without them by placing students in classrooms of their own. I believe, however, that the alternative models will, in the long run, provide opportunities for experienced teachers to seek out this role when the advantages to them become apparent.

In the form of the model proposed here, two student-teachers assume full responsibility for one weekly hour of English instruction in each class of a given grade level. The hour of instruction is built into the regular school schedule and becomes an integral part of it. The content of instruction is jointly negotiated with the English language teaching staff headed by the Department Coordinator and other interested key personnel in the school system.

A. Advantages for Schools:

1. In a time of budget cutbacks on teaching hours, schools participating in the Professional Development School model receive free additional hours. This advantage appeals to school principals who find it increasingly difficult to relegate the given amount of teaching hours among the important subject areas and social issues they are expected to serve.

2. The generation of a pool of future teachers who have become integrated into the specific atmosphere and culture of the training school will be seen by principals and subject department heads as a source for filling vacancies in problematic subjects, such as Math and English, in which increased demands for pupil achievement must be attained.

B. Advantages for Teachers:

In addition to the weekly student-teaching hour, students will be required to observe English language teachers and other teachers on a regular basis. Students will be required to actively participate in classroom activities. They will also be required to contribute one hour of tutoring to pupils with special needs.

1. Teachers will be aided by the student teachers during periods of class work in which students will approach individual pupils to help with subject material and to motivate through individual attention and encouragement.

2. Teachers will choose individual pupils for tutoring on the basis of individual needs, including attention deficiency, under achievement in the subject area, lack of motivation due to emotional problems or lack of interest in classroom tasks on the part of native English-speaking pupils.

3. Teachers will have the option of dividing the class into groups and assigning the student-teacher a specific task as head of one group.

4. Teachers will be aided by students in grading papers after meeting with them to explain the desired mode of assessment.

5. Teachers will become part of an ongoing team designed to assess the effectiveness of the Professional Development School model from their experience. They will be contacted in an informal manner to alter and redefine the roles served by the student-teachers. Reflection and inquiry will become habitual modes for continually testing, refining and adjusting the program to the needs of the participants (Abdal-Haqq, 1992).

6. Interested teachers will be given the opportunity to collaborate on research designed to assess the status of the Professional Development School model in conjunction with faculty members of the teachers' college. This will result in

recognition of their contribution to the development of the model. Joint publication of academic articles will bring personal satisfaction in terms of professional development as well as recognition for salary benefits by the Ministry of Education.

C. Advantages for Student-Teachers:

1. Students will gain total autonomy in their classrooms without fear of evaluation by school personnel. This will include choice of teaching methods and subject-matter content within the area of instruction negotiated between themselves and the English Department staff.

2. Students will develop their own interpersonal style with pupils and will negotiate class management rules and norms within their classrooms.

3. Students will receive individual supervision in the school by the college Teacher-Trainer, who will visit the school on a weekly basis. This will facilitate the immediate coping with issues that arise in the here-and-now on an ongoing basis.

4. Students will receive group supervision in the school on a weekly basis by the college Teacher-Trainer who will meet with all the students assigned to the specific school. This will facilitate peer sharing and cooperation on common issues relevant to the students' teaching and school experience.

5. Students will be viewed by school personnel with more equal status with teachers by virtue of their contribution to the school and their readiness to cope with the reality of the school environment.

6. Students will gain authentic teaching experience in the classroom and will be perceived as real teachers by their students, as opposed to their previous role as teacher-helpers.

7. More experienced 3rd-year students will support and advise 2nd-year students in their initial teaching experiences. Peer cooperation and assessment will develop naturally out of the joint effort to succeed in the classroom. Students will experiment with different combinations of classroom management in terms of team teaching.

D. Advantages for Pupils:

1. The pupils will have an alternative teacher figure to turn to in times of individual difficulties. The student-teacher will be less burdened and, consequently, more available to individual pupils.

2. The pupils will perceive the student-teacher as a less judgmental figure in the school system by virtue of her younger age and lack of evaluative authority in regards to academic achievement and grades.

3. The pupils will learn to appreciate and utilize the extra time allocated to English to further their own needs and progress during the additional hour of student-teaching and during the tutoring sessions.

4. The students will come to view the Professional Development School model as an effort on the part of the school to relate to individual differences to improve teaching and learning (Cowart, 1998).

Conclusion

When viewed in this way, the form of the Professional Development School model proposed here offers an opportunity for all participants to take part as equals in the creation and development of an innovative program designed to help all members improve their work on an ongoing basis.

Currently, Professional Development School models are formulations of ideals. The actual form each will take will depend upon the specific school culture, the participants and the emphasis on specific goals. The emphasis in the specific model proposed here is on teacher training, which is believed will influence greater learning by both pupils and in-service teachers. It is also hoped that the new role of student-teacher will activate changes in the ways schools see themselves in the future. It may be difficult to define the common denominators of the wide range of educational institutions calling themselves PDS in the future.

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